

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 01289 130458Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5220

S E C R E T RANGOON 1289

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SNAR, BM
SUBJ: BURMA'S USE OF NCAP PROVIDED AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 090518

1. THE FOLLOWING REPORT RESPONDS TO THE REQUEST IN PARA 6,
REFTEL.

2. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE INFORMATION UPON WHICH
TO MAKE A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USE THAT HAS BEEN MADE
OF NCAP PROVIDED EQUIPMENT SINCE ITS ARRIVAL IN BURMA.
WHAT LITTLE INFORMATION WE DO HAVE ON THE USE OF THESE
AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. THE GUB HAS REPEATEDLY
ASSURED US THAT THE AIRCRAFT ARE BEING USED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE 1974 AGREEMENT, BUT IN THE PAST THE BURMESE HAVE MADE
CLEAR THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE DETAILED OR FLIGHT LOG
INFORMATION ON THE KYE OF THESE AIRCRAFT. THEY HAVE SAID
THAT THEY DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THE AGREEMENT OBLIGATES THEM
TO PROVIDE SUCH REPORTS. (WE ARE AGAIN REQUESTING THEM
TO DO SO, AS INSTRUCTED IN REFTEL PARA 3.)

3. IN GENERAL TERMS, WE DO KNOW THAT THE AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN
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USED IN SUPPORT OF THE FOUR MAJOR ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS
SINCE OCTOBER 1975 DIRECTED AGAINST BORDER AREA REFINERY
INSTALLATIONS. THEY HAVE ALSO BEEN USED IN ATTACKING NARCOTICS-
CARRYING CARAVANS AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE ANNUAL OPIUM
CROP ERADICATION CAMPAIGNS. BEYOND THIS, WE BELIEVE THE GUB
IS IN SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE 1974
ACCORD, BUT THE EVIDENCE IS RATHER SKETCHY. WE HAVE NO

PROOF TO SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS THAT THE EQUIPMENT IS BEING USED AGAINST INSURGENTS WHO ARE NOT ALSO INVOLVED IN THE OPIUM TRADE.

4. MOST OF THE INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE ON THE DAY TO DAY USE OF THE AIRCRAFT IS BASED ON CONFIDENTIAL DAO SOURCES, SUPPLEMENTED BY SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE. AS REGARDS BELL 205-A HELICOPTERS DELIVERED TO THE GUB FROM 1975 TO 76 SNUN DAO HAS BEEN ABLE

TO OBTAIN FLIGHT FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON ONLY 10 TO 20 PERCENT OF THE ACTUAL USE OF THESE HELICOPTERS. THESE REPORTS SHOW WHERE FLIGHTS WERE MADE, BUT DO NOT INDICATE THE PURPOSE OF THE FLIGHT. WITHIN THE SMALL DAO SAMPLE, ROUGHLY 60 PERCENT OF THE FLIGHTS WERE TO OR FROM THE SHAN STUHE, THE AREA OF BCP FIGHTING AND BURMA'S MAIN OPIUM PRODUCING ZONE. THE BALANCE OF THE FLIGHTS WERE TO OTHER DESTINATIONSSV UNDOUBTEDLY SOME OF THESE OTHER FLIGHTS WERE FOR TRAINING, MAINTENANCE AND OTHER ACTIVITY DEFENSIBLE UNDER THE AGREEMENT. ALSO, OUR INFORMATION RELATES MAINLY TO FLIGHTS TO AND FROM THE VICINITY OF RANGOON, WHICH ARE LESS LIKELY TO INVOLVE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITY THAN FLIGHTS FROM OUTLYING BASES, SO OUR SMALL SAMPLE IN ALL PROBABILITY DOES NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT THE OVERALL SITUATION.

5. REGARDING THE FOKKER F-27 AIRCRAFT DELIVERED IN JUNE 1976, DAO HAS RELATIVELY COMPLETE FLIGHT FOLLOWING
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INFORMATION, BUT PRIOR TO JANUARY 1978 WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE PURPOSE OF THE FLIGHTS. THE FLIGHT FOLLOWING INFORMATION INDICATES THAT OVER HALF OF THE FLIGHTS ORIGINATED IN OR WERE DESTINED FOR AREAS OF KNOWN ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITY. A SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF THE FLIGHTS WERE PROBABLY IN SUPPORT OF THE HELICOPTERS--FLYING IN SPARES, SERVING AS A COMMO CENTER, ETC.--BUT WE CAN CITE NO SPECIFIC DATA THAT WOULD ENABLE US TO QUANTIFY THIS AMOUNT. ONE FH-227 AIRCRAFT WAS DELIVERED IN JANUARY 1978 AND ANOTHER IN MARCH. SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL, THESE AIRCRAFT AND (SINCE JANUARY 1978) THE F-27 HAVE BEEN USED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FOR MOVING BURMA ARMY TROOPS TO THE SHAN STATE TO REINFORCE POSITIONS UNDER REPEATED ATTACK BY THE BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY (BCP) THESE PAST THREE MONTHS AND TO EVACUTE WOUNDED FROM THESE BATTLES. THIS TEMPORARY NEED HAS BEEN CREATED BY THE STEPPED UP INTENSITY AND AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE BCP ATTACKS. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE BCP IS ALSO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF THE OPIUM GROWN IN BURMA IS IN TERRITORY UNDER BCP CONTROL. WE ARE CERTAIN THE BURMESE WOULD BE VERY PUZZLED IF THIS USE WERE DEEMED UNRELATED TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION.

6. THE QUESTION OF IMPROVING OUR MONITORING CAPABILITY IS
BEING ADDRESSED SEPTTEL.
BEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION

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